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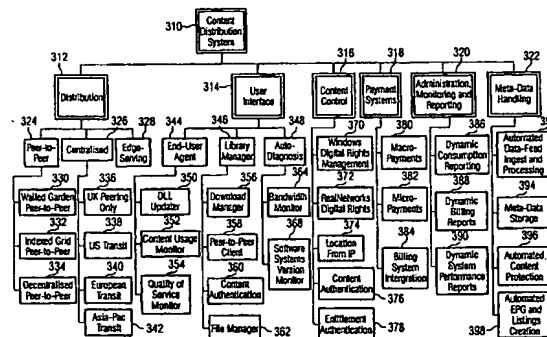
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(54) Title: DATA DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: There is described a method of distributing rights-managed media data items to users, wherein each media data item has associated rights information, including a time-limited availability attribute. The method comprises, for each media data item: in a seeding phase; storing the media data item; receiving requests for the media data item from a plurality of users; determining the availability of the requested media data item based on the associated rights information; transmitting the requested media data item to the plurality of users; and storing information identifying the media data item, the associated rights information for the media data item and a list of users who have received the media data item. In a peer-to-peer phase the method comprises receiving requests for the media data item from at least one further user; compiling a list of sources of the media data item in a peer-to-peer network based on the list of users who have received the media data item; determining the availability of the requested media data item based on the associated rights-information; transmitting the list of sources to the at least one further user to enable the user to obtain the requested media data item via the peer-to-peer network; and storing information identifying the requested media data item, the at least one further user and the rights-information of the requested media data item.

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